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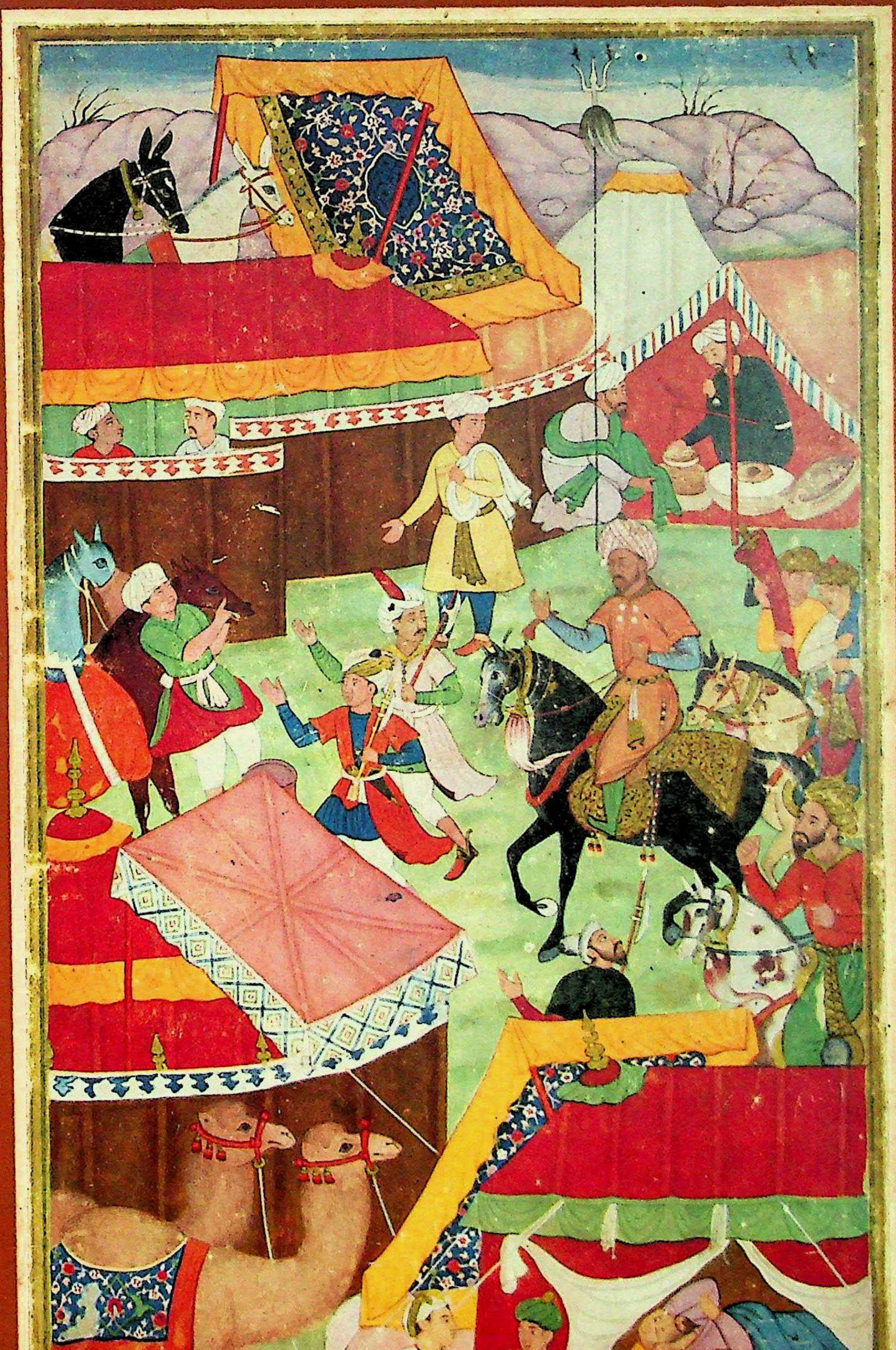
Mughal Miniatures



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Mughal Miniatures

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Text and Notes

by

RAI KRISHNADASA

Founder-Curator: Bharat Kala Bhavan

BANARAS

Introduction

by

HUMAYUN KABIR

LALIT KALA AKADEMI
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General Editor

KARL KHANDALAVALA

"Mughal Miniatures" is the first publication of the Lalit Kala Akademi in the above series. The text and notes are by Rai Krishnadasa, founder-curator of the famous collection of the Bharat Kala Bhavan, Banaras. One of the pioneer critics in the field of Indian Art, he is a connoisseur of almost unrivalled experience. Prof. Humayun Kabir, Secretary, Union Ministry of Education, is a well-known author and it was largely due to his efforts that the now defunct Bharat Kala Samiti undertook the project of this publication which has been completed by the Lalit Kala Akademi.

The next two brochures in the series will be "The Krishna Legend" by M. S. Randhawa and "Mewar Painting" by Dr. Motichandra. Each publication will have a brief but authoritative text supplemented by notes. Emphasis will be laid on a high standard of colour and monochrome reproduction.

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INTRODUCTION

The ancient tradition of painting in India has few relics left but fortunately we still have the frescoes at Ajanta and some other places which preserve the memory of an attempt to paint in timelessness. These frescoes are the aesthetic expression of a culture whose essential characteristics were synthesis and balance. The walls and ceilings at Ajanta are covered with scenes drawn equally from the life of the crowd and the life of the devotee. The first is inundated by the joy of life and represents power and glory, life and youth. The second depicts the unexciting and tranquil life of meditation and represents detachment and devotion, piety and faith. The two worlds are however treated neither separately nor differently.

The change to the sharp precision of Mughal painting is almost dialectical. The art which was brought to India by the Mughals was inspired by an intense individuality. It saw things in clear light and in definite outline. It looked at every detail of the individual figure and took infinite pains with it. Its portraiture is of amazing cleverness though the stamp of individualism in such painting is at times exaggerated. Born and cradled in the courts of Changez and Taimur, it could not conceivably be soft or sentimental. It felt the urge of life with tremendous force and communicated its energy to what it painted.

When this vigorous and individualistic style met the traditional painting of India, a new style was evolved which combined elements of both. Though devoid of the intense aspiration of ancient Indian painting, this world of courtly manners shows an innate lyricism which is yet always mindful of decorum.

Mughal painting in its inception was a synthesis of Indian and Persian art. The style of the late Timurid school of Herat was imported into India by Humayun who brought to his court two Persian masters of Safavi painting under Shah Tahmasp.

Politically, Akbar sought to develop an Indian nation by his alliance with the Rajputs, and socially, this led to the incorporation of Hindu customs and practices in the life of the court. In the field of art, it led to the fusion which gave birth to Mughal painting. Many Indian artists — Hindus and Muslims — were trained by the Persian masters. Later, Flemish and Italian prints brought by Jesuit missionaries made some of the artists aware of the existence of European art. Akbar was eclectic in temper and accepted what he liked without considering its source of origin. His one test was whether the elements conformed to his vision of reality. In painting, he sought this test in fidelity to nature. The result was a new Indian art whose general composition is Persian, figures and architecture partly Persian, partly Rajput, while the influence of European art is seen occasionally in perspective and the colouring of the background.

The Indian tradition asserted itself in various ways. Like most earlier works of art in India, the work of the Mughal painter was the collective effort of a group. Within the group there was ample scope for specialisation. Some prepared the lay-out and general design, others drew the figures and details, and still others added the necessary colours. Pictures were not generally signed by the artist but the court clerk often noted down the names at the bottom. Illustrations, especially in the earlier phases, were predominantly epic in character. Some of the earlier paintings portrayed the stories of the *Hamzah Namah* (Plate 1) which some people regard as an allegory of Muslim conquest. Akbar's desire for evolving a common nationality led to the inclusion of subjects from Hindu tradition or mythology. We find many illustrations for the translations of Sanskrit texts. We also have the illustrations of the *Babar Namah* (Plates 2 and 3) to chronicle the life of the first and the real founder of Mughal power in India.

Jahangir's accession to the throne was marked by a change in the tone and temper of Mughal miniature art. The paintings show detailed and careful study and there is a new use of light and shade. Court ceremonies, hunting scenes, portraits, and studies of animals and birds (Plates 4 and 5) became increasingly popular. A new sense of delicacy which delights in thin white costumes for men and women, in inlaid white marble in architecture and subdued colour schemes in painting has been attributed to the influence of Jahangir's consort Nur Jahan. Individual masters like Abul Hasan Nadiruzzaman, Ustad Mansur and Manohar, to mention but a few, stand out and make Jahangir's reign perhaps the most brilliant period of Mughal painting.

There was no basic change under Shah Jahan but there is a sense of over-ripeness which is the prelude to decay. The accent on pomp and ceremony became more marked. Increasing mannerism of details and emphasis on refined etiquette are touched with a certain dreamy weariness. It is curious to note that the Taj Mahal was not painted once during Shah Jahan's time. This is perhaps the most refined phase of Mughal painting but the originality and vitality of the earlier period has in some measure been lost.

The deterioration became unmistakable during Aurangzeb's reign. The momentum of Shah Jahan's patronage continued for the first few years but thereafter the court lost interest in art. With the withdrawal of the Emperor's patronage, the painters depended increasingly on the support of princes and noblemen. During Aurangzeb's long stay in the Deccan, a style developed with a predominance of military scenes and official portraiture.

After Aurangzeb, paintings became more and more stereotyped and conventional. Rich ornamentation with much use of gold, and fashionable costumes became popular.

Themes also gradually changed and are marked by a new sentimentality and romanticism which at times express themselves in an idealization of village life. There was a brief revival between 1713 and 1748 A.D., which in some examples is reminiscent of better days (Plate 9), but in the main the output is effete though often technically competent. A large scale transfer of Mughal painters to Rajput courts gave rise to a new Mughal-Rajput school which superseded the earlier Rajput style and dominated the first half of the 18th century. It retained the Mughal technique but applied it to Rajput themes.

With the decay of imperial power, many local schools grew up but this provincial Mughal art produced nothing of outstanding merit. By the end of the 18th century, the Mughal tradition had lost its verve.

A last attempt at revival during the reign of Shah Alam (1759-1806) led to an imitation of earlier miniatures. But the spirit of the earlier period could not be captured. Mughal painting, as a vital and distinctive school had decayed by the end of the 18th century and came to an end soon after 1857.

There was no systematic State patronage of the arts in the interregnum between the dissolution of Mughal power and the achievement of Indian independence. Princes and landlords were almost the only patrons of the artist during this period. After independence, their position declined and there was a risk that art may suffer because of lack of support. It thus became a national need to ensure conditions for the free and full expression of the creative gifts of the artist.

One of the decisions taken in this behalf was for the establishment of a National Academy of Art. Pending the establishment of the Academy, an Advisory Board of Art was set up under the title Bharat Kala Samiti. The Samiti decided on the immediate publication of a Mughal album, a Contemporary Art album and a set of coloured picture postcards. The present album is being published in fulfilment of that decision.

With the establishment of the Lalit Kala Akademi (National Academy of Art), the Bharat Kala Samiti has ceased to exist and its activities taken over by the Akademi. I should like to place on record my appreciation of the work which the members of the Samiti did and in particular express my personal obligation to Shri Karl Khandalavala, Dr. H. Goetz and Shri Barada Ukil for their unstinted co-operation in the production of this album.

New Delhi

Humayun Kabir

MUGHAL PAINTING

THE Mughal school of painting—from the 16th to the 18th century formed, as it were, the spinal column of the various schools of Indian miniature art. If the Mughal school had not come into being, the Pahari and Rajasthani schools would not have emerged in the forms in which we find them.

The Mughals came from Central Asia, where the atmosphere was surcharged with a love for painting. Moreover, the Mughals had adopted Persian culture which further strengthened their interest in this form of art. The inspiration of the Persian school was Chinese painting and the treatment was two dimensional, stress being laid on decorative motifs and conventions. The draughtsmanship is calligraphic and, at times, the third dimension is suggested merely by thickening the lines.

Behzad, one of the greatest painters of Persia, brought about a synthesis in Persian painting. This happened a little before Babar (1526-1530) who has offered criticism of Behzad's work in his delightful Memoirs, thereby revealing that the innate love of painting of this first Great Mughal was a family trait.

It is, however, certain that till the time of Humayun (1530-1556) the Mughal court had no school of painting. No doubt, in keeping with the family tradition, Humayun loved the graphic arts. Even in his troubled days, when he was in exile, he patronised the Persian masters Mir Sayyid Ali and Khwaja Abdus Samad who joined him in India when he regained his throne.

But there can be no question that the foundations of the Mughal school largely rested on the circumstance that in the following reign many Indian painters from various parts of the country such as Gujerat, Gwalior, Kashmir, and elsewhere, were employed in the Imperial atelier to work and be trained under the Persian masters Mir Sayyid Ali and Abdus Samad, and possibly the Central Asian artist Farrukh Beg, the Qilmaq. The pupils soon mastered the finesse and technical excellence of Persian painting, both of *line* and varied lively colour. In course of time it was inevitable that the mental outlook of the Indian artists would make itself felt, and this, in fact, happened. The arabesque of Persian art resolved itself into a *line* of different quality and tempo, and so also the colour scheme took on a different pattern. The emphasis on a purely decorative art began to disappear, and a new realism crept in. The employment of Indian types and Indian subject matter further aided the transformation. Similarly European influences are traceable here and there.

Thus Akbar (1556-1605) was the real founder of the Mughal school. Besides being a great ruler, he was also a great man whose basic principle was *sulah-kul* or unity among all human beings. Since his youth he evinced interest in painting and it is said that in his childhood he had received lessons in that art. He was an ardent admirer of Indian culture and was markedly Indianised in his outlook. He regarded the art of painting not merely as a means for pleasure, but as an exposition of life itself.

It was thus a combination of various factors that gave birth to the Mughal school. In the work of the Akbar period, aerial perspective, decorative motifs, and the treatment of hills and battle scenes, amongst other things, clearly indicate Persian influence. Its own positive qualities, however, distinguish it at once from the Persian miniature.

In the formative period of Mughal painting there existed an indigenous school of MSS illustration known as *Apabhramsa*. It is sometimes referred to as the Western Indian school, or the Gujerati school, or the Jain school. It is thus clear that there were many MSS illustrators all over India, not wanting in skill, who were easily available for recruitment to the Imperial atelier, and whose inclusion therein was bound to affect the development of Mughal painting.

Prof. Tucci has published some paintings of Kashmir origin, and the *Braja bhasha* literature of the early sixteenth century also refers to a Kashmir style. The Kashmir school was influenced by the art of neighbouring Central Asia. Its effects, if any, on the Mughal school cannot yet be properly assessed.

The existence of a Rajasthani style, distinct from the *Apabhramsa* style, during the formative period of Mughal painting is also possible. But to date no examples of any early Rajasthani style, prior to the closing years of the 16th century, have come to light. On the basis of what is available it may be contended that the Rajasthani style did not spring up all of a sudden. Early Rajasthani paintings of the first quarter of the 17th century do bear the stamp of tradition. But the matter is controversial.

There is some internal evidence in the great *Hamzah Namah* series (Plate 1) to lend support to the view that the early Mughal artists were influenced by traditions which may have emanated from Rajasthan and Kashmir. For instance, while depicting the overthrow of idols in heathen temples, at the birth of the Prophet Muhammad, the painter of this scene has inserted Kashmir cloth-paintings in place of images. In another picture, the well-side rural background is Rajasthani both in spirit and form. In colouring too, though the Persian tradition is often apparent, there is an original approach to the problems of tonality. The painters of the Akbar period greatly improved the quality of pigments, and pure refined colours continued to be used till the post-Shah Jahan period. In the Imperial atelier there were more than a hundred painters and the majority of them were Indians. Several painters were engaged on a single painting — one drew the outline, a second applied colours, and a third engaged himself in final outlining or the accurate portrayal of faces. This practice was not known in Persian art. In fact, just as the patronage of Akbar gave rise to new forms of architecture, music, etc. so also the art of painting was given an individuality which distinguished it from other schools.

The paintings of the Akbar period (1556-1605) may be divided broadly into four groups namely:—

(i) illustrated MSS on Persian subjects such as the *Hamzah Namah*, *Shah Namah*, etc.;

(ii) illustrated MSS of Indian epics and romances such as the *Ramayana*, *Mahabharata*, *Harivamsa*, *Nala-Damayanti*, *Katha-saritsagara*, *etc.*;

(iii) illustrated MSS of historical interest such as *Tarikh-i-Alfi*, *Tarikh-i-Khandan-i-Taimuriya*, *Akbar Namah*, *Babar Namah* (Plates 2 and 3), *etc.*;

(iv) Portraits. In the words of Abul Fazl: 'His Majesty got himself portrayed and ordered that the portraits of all the *umara* (noblemen) should be prepared. In this way a great collection of portraits came into being.'

In the *Ain-i-Akbari* Abul Fazl tells us about Akbar's love for painting and his regard for his painters. Some of his artists were *Mansabdars* and occupied high offices of State. In 1573 when Akbar, accompanied by twenty-seven officers, led a lightning expedition to Ahmedabad, there were also three painters in the royal entourage. If a distinguished visitor came to the court he was taken around the atelier by the Emperor himself. According to the testimony of Jahangir, Akbar treated the Persian master Abdus Samad with great respect. Such was the background against which Mughal painting came into being and which provided the stimulus for further development in the following reign.

Jahangir (1605-1628) was a man with a developed aesthetic sense. He loved painting and greatly appreciated the beauties of nature. He possessed a descriptive sense, as can be seen from his Memoirs, and was endowed with an inquiring mind. He was a connoisseur of miniature art and greatly prided himself on his connoisseurship. The paintings of his period well symbolise his character.

From the days of his youth Jahangir gave shelter to a Persian painter named Aqa Riza, whose son Abul Hasan became Jahangir's favourite artist. With the end of the Akbar school, Abul Hasan's influence on the Jahangir school became predominant. The illustration of popular legends and Pauranic stories, so common in the Akbar period, went out of vogue. The chief aim of the Jahangir school was to focus attention on incidents concerning the Emperor's court life in all its phases. The Persian influence also gradually disappeared giving place to realism and close observation of nature.

By the order of Jahangir several illustrated copies of his Memoirs were prepared. Not a single complete copy is available, but stray leaves, depicting incidents from his life, are found in various collections all over the world. Moreover, the Emperor was exceedingly interested in the portrayal of animals and birds (Plates 4 and 5), and the greatest master of such paintings was his court artist Ustad Mansur (Plate 4). Jahangir also had many flower studies made, only two of which have so far come to light. To this period belongs the practice of mounting miniatures with gorgeous *hashiyahs* (border decoration on the mount). These *hashiyahs* became even more elaborate in the reign of Shah Jahan.

The Mughal school in the reign of Shah Jahan (1628-1658) again undergoes a change of form. It begins to symbolize the immense wealth and pomp of the Mughal court, which had then reached its apex. Though there is to be found high technical excellence in the delineation of minute details, fine brushwork, magnificence of colour, and careful drawing of limbs, specially the hands, there is nevertheless, on occasion a stiffness which is disturbing. Darbar scenes, however, attain unusual splendour (Plates 6 and 8), while some of the best work depict groups of holy men, saints, and dervishes. A portrait-technique known as *siyah qalam* (a sketch lightly touched with colour or gold) was also popular during this reign. The origin of this portrait-technique is doubtless to be traced to the miniatures of the artist Muhammad Nadir of Samarkhand who worked under the Emperor Jahangir.

In the time of Aurangzeb (1658-1707), in common with other aspects of Mughal culture, the art of painting also suffered. Many studies of the Emperor, from his boyhood till he became a bent old man, are available. But despite the fact that we do come across numerous portraits, darbar scenes, and war scenes, there is a dearth of miniatures of high quality.

After Aurangzeb, the history of Mughal painting, like the history of the Mughal empire, is one of decay. Though upto the time of Muhammad Shah (1720-1748) Mughal painting, as far as technique is concerned, retained something of its former glory (Plate 9), the moral decay of the court, reflected in the manners and customs of a sensuous aristocracy resulted in the adoption of harem themes. Music parties, dancing parties, drinking scenes, and love scenes, became the order of the day.

At this stage one finds that many features of the Mughal school were adopted increasingly by the Rajasthani school, while Rajasthani painting in its turn greatly influenced later Mughal art. Owing to the levelling down and assimilation of traditions, both the styles became fused, and at times it becomes difficult to assign works in this mixed style exclusively to one school or the other. In the Hill States also, paintings based on the Mughal style had an increased vogue after *circa* 1740.

Whatever traces of Mughal glory had remained, disappeared with Alamgir II (1754-1759). The Battle of Panipat acted as the drop-curtain on the great drama. Shah Alam (1759-1806), the successor of Alamgir II, was an emperor only in name. The invasions and consequent plunder by Nadir Shah, Abdali, Surajmal Jat, the Marathas, the Rohillas, and the Sikhs, had left the coffers of the Imperial capital at Delhi empty, and led to the dispersal of many priceless miniatures. The political unrest and economic chaos was accompanied by a deterioration of all values. This deterioration had set in as a reaction following upon the death of Aurangzeb the austere Emperor.

In spite of the loss of territories and wealth the Mughals continued to maintain their ateliers midst the fading splendour of their court. When we come to the period of Shah Alam we find that the artists still had in their possession the tracings (*charbas*) of the old miniatures handed down from generation to generation, and with their help they prepared new copies, which have deceived more than one connoisseur. To make the copies complete, even the royal seals were stamped on such paintings. It is likely that several of these copies were prepared for Shah Alam himself, such as the magnificent portrait of Jahangir (Plate 10) in close imitation of an earlier portrait of that Emperor by the artist Bichittar.

The inevitable also happened. Murshidabad, Lucknow, and Hyderabad, the former capitals of the Mughal *Subahs* (provinces) became virtually the centres of independent states. In these capitals the late Mughal style flourished, but bereft of any progressive spirit it came to an end by the closing years of the 18th century.

RAI KRISHNADASA

PLATE 1

A SCENE FROM THE HAMZAH-NAMAH

School of Akbar, circa, 1567-1582 *A.D. Bharat Kala Bhavan, Banaras.*
(27½ x 23 ins.)

THE *Hamzah Namah* is a curious romantic tale in Persian, describing the adventures of Amir Hamzah, uncle of the Prophet Muhammad. Akbar loved the *Hamzah* stories so much that he recounted them in his palace like a professional story-teller.

The *Ain-i-Akbari*, Ferishta in his history, and the *Maasir ul Umara* are all agreed that the *Hamzah* series was painted by the order of Akbar. The series contained 1,400 paintings in twelve volumes.

Thus it is wrong to assume, as many art historians have done, that the *Hamzah* series was commenced in the reign of Humayun. Abdul Qadir Badayuni, the plain-speaking chronicler of Akbar, observes that by 1582, when the work on illustrating the *Mahabharata* was commenced, the illustrations of the *Hamzah Namah* and *Shah Namah* had been completed, the work having been done over fifteen years. In this way the period of the *Hamzah Namah* series falls between 1567 and 1582 if the period of fifteen years is to be calculated from 1582. In any event, it is clear that the entire series was done in the reign of Akbar and before 1582. In 1575 Akbar's mind underwent a revolutionary change as a result of which he ordered the translation of the *Mahabharata* into Persian.

The *Hamzah Namah* paintings done on cloth measure approximately 2 x 2½ feet. Unfortunately most of them are lost. About 125 paintings from this extensive series have survived, out of which only a few are in Indian collections, the rest being in foreign museums. The Bharat Kala Bhavan has two examples, one of which is reproduced herein. The Hyderabad Museum, the Baroda Museum, Sir Cowasji Jehangir, Bart., and Mr. A. C. Ardeshir of Bombay also possess one each.

The *Hamzah Namah* paintings are notable for the representation of crowds, dramatic action, and an atmosphere of miracles.

Plate 1 deals with one of the many legends in the book and it may be noted how the surprise of the person seated on the throne, the fury of the elephant razing the fort to the ground, and the confusion in the crowd, all combine to create a weird atmosphere. The rich tumultuous colour scheme, which is a departure from the Persian tradition, is a distinguishing feature of this painting. The Persian influence however is still apparent, but the treatment of the elephant is purely Indian. The costumes are typical of the Akbar period. The figure seated on his throne is seen wearing the characteristic small turban and four pointed *jamah* with narrow waist sash so popular during Akbar's reign.

It is noteworthy that we find paintings on cloth in a similar idiom but depicting Hindu deities. One such painting of Durga is in the Bharat Kala Bhavan.

Plate 1 is a detail covering more than half of the original painting. The figure in the right top corner is Umar 'Ayyar' the famous character in the *Hamzah Namah.*

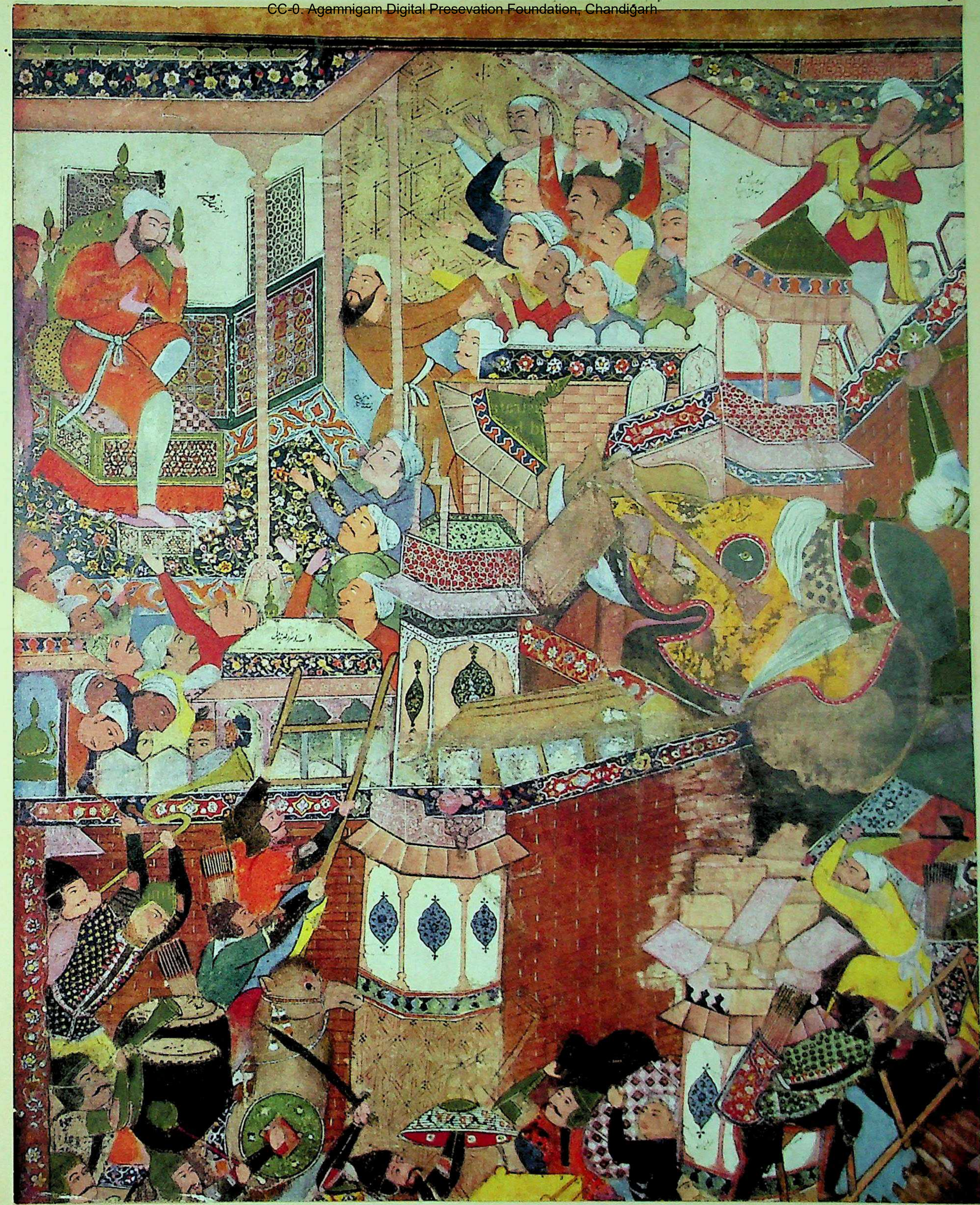


PLATE 2

AN ILLUSTRATION FROM THE BABAR NAMAH

School of Akbar, circa 1598 *A.D. National Museum, New Delhi.*

(Actual size)

Illustrated copies of the *Babar Namah* are to be seen in (1) The British Museum, (2) The Victoria and Albert Museum, London (incomplete), (3) The Louvre, Paris, and (4) The Leningrad Museum. These copies are either contemporary with the period of Akbar (1556-1605) or are datable immediately after the death of the Emperor in 1605.

The copy from which the two illustrations (Plates 2 and 3) are reproduced is in the National Museum, New Delhi, and is the fifth important copy of the *Babar Namah* known to students of Mughal painting. This copy belonged to the Imperial Library as is attested by the signature of Shah Jahan and the names of the royal artists inscribed on the paintings. It is well known that Shah Jahan was in the habit of signing manuscripts in the Imperial Library.

The present copy has 183 paintings and the names of the following 48 painters are to be found thereon:—(1) Anant, (2) Asi, (3) Asi Kahar, (4) Ibrahim Kahar, (5) Kesava Kahar, (6) Khem, (7) Khemkaran, (8) Govind, (9) Jagannath, (10) Jamshed, (11) Jamal, (12) Tulsi, (13) Daulat, (14) Daulat Khanazad, (15) Dhanraj, (16) Dhannu, (17) Dharamdas, (18) Naqi Khanazad, (19) Nand Kalan, (20) Nand Kuanr, (21) Narsingh, (22) Nana, (23) Payag, (24) Paras, (25) Prem, (26) Fattu, (27) Farrukh Chela, (28) Bande, (29) Banwari Khurd, (30) Bhagwan, (31) Bhawani, (32) Bhag, (33) Bhim Gujrati, (34) Bhura, (35) Mangra, (36) Mansur, (37) Mahesa, (38) Madho, (39) Miskin, (40) Muhammad Kashmiri, (41) Lachhman, (42) Launga, (43) Shankar, (44) Shivdas, (45) Sarwan, (46) Surdas, (47) Hajra and (48) Husain Chela.

Two names are doubtful, and several paintings bear no attribution. Whether Khemkaran and Khem, Asi and Asi Kahar, Daulat and Daulat Khanazad are the same or different artists is not certain. Some of the names in the above list are not traceable in other illustrated MSS of the Akbar period.

The date of the MSS can fortunately be ascertained. Folio 116 illustrating the twenty-fourth picture by Khem bears an inscription which states it was painted in the 42nd regnal year of Akbar, i.e., 1598 A.D. It may, therefore, be surmised that the work was illustrated between the 41st and 43rd regnal year of Akbar. On an average each painter has painted about four pictures in the *Babar Namah*, and the work on many paintings must have been undertaken simultaneously. On this basis one to two and half years must have been necessary for the completion of the work.

The quality of the paintings is superb. The two miniatures reproduced as Plates 2 and 3 are representative examples of the Akbar school using the narrative method of expression.

Plate 2 represents an encampment scene. In actual life the Mughals were habituated to live in camps and, therefore, their fort was also designated as *urdu-i-mualla* or Great Camp. In the present copy of the *Babar Namah*, as also elsewhere, we find that Babar was of slightly dark complexion.

There are many beautiful drawings of birds and animals in this MSS and a superb scene of snowfall in Kabul. The quality of almost all the paintings is excellent. There is little doubt that this copy of the *Babar Namah* must be regarded as amongst the finest of the illustrated MSS of the Akbar period. It was acquired by the National Museum from the library of the St. John's College, Agra.

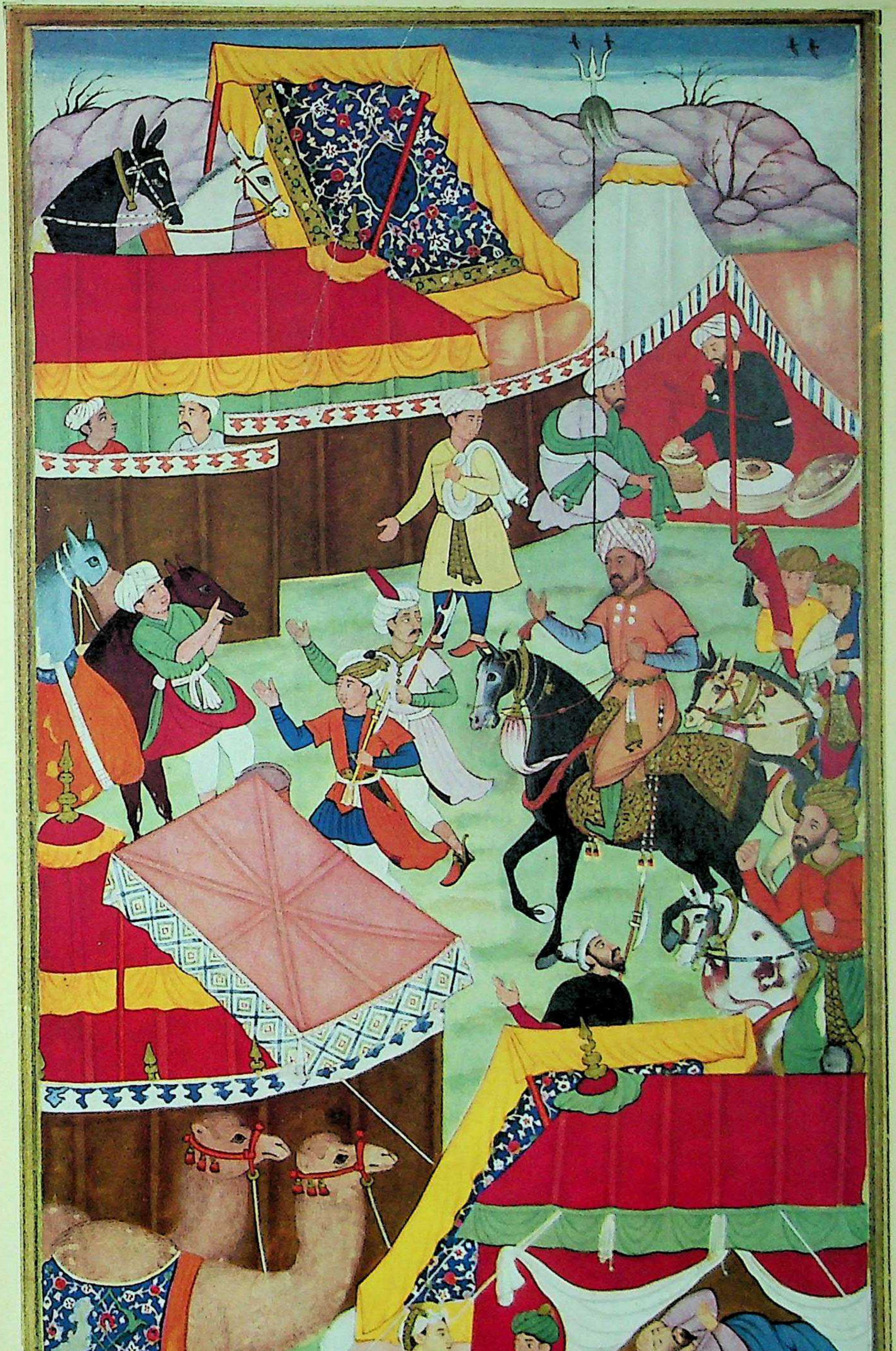


PLATE 3

AN ILLUSTRATION FROM THE BABAR NAMAH

School of Akbar, circa 1598 *A.D. National Museum, New Delhi.*

(Actual size)

THE fall of Babar from his horse and its galloping action make a vivid, tense scene. Though the treatment of the hills generally follows the Persian manner, their modulated contours and construction distinguish them from the strictly Persian convention.

The Persian text, suitably placed to form a part of the composition, reads,

> 'I fell down headlong to the ground, although that very moment I stood up and rode my horse. But my reason did not come to its own till nightfall.'

In the miniature Babar appears to be temporarily dazed, and the artist has apparently depicted the moment just before he rose to remount his steed.

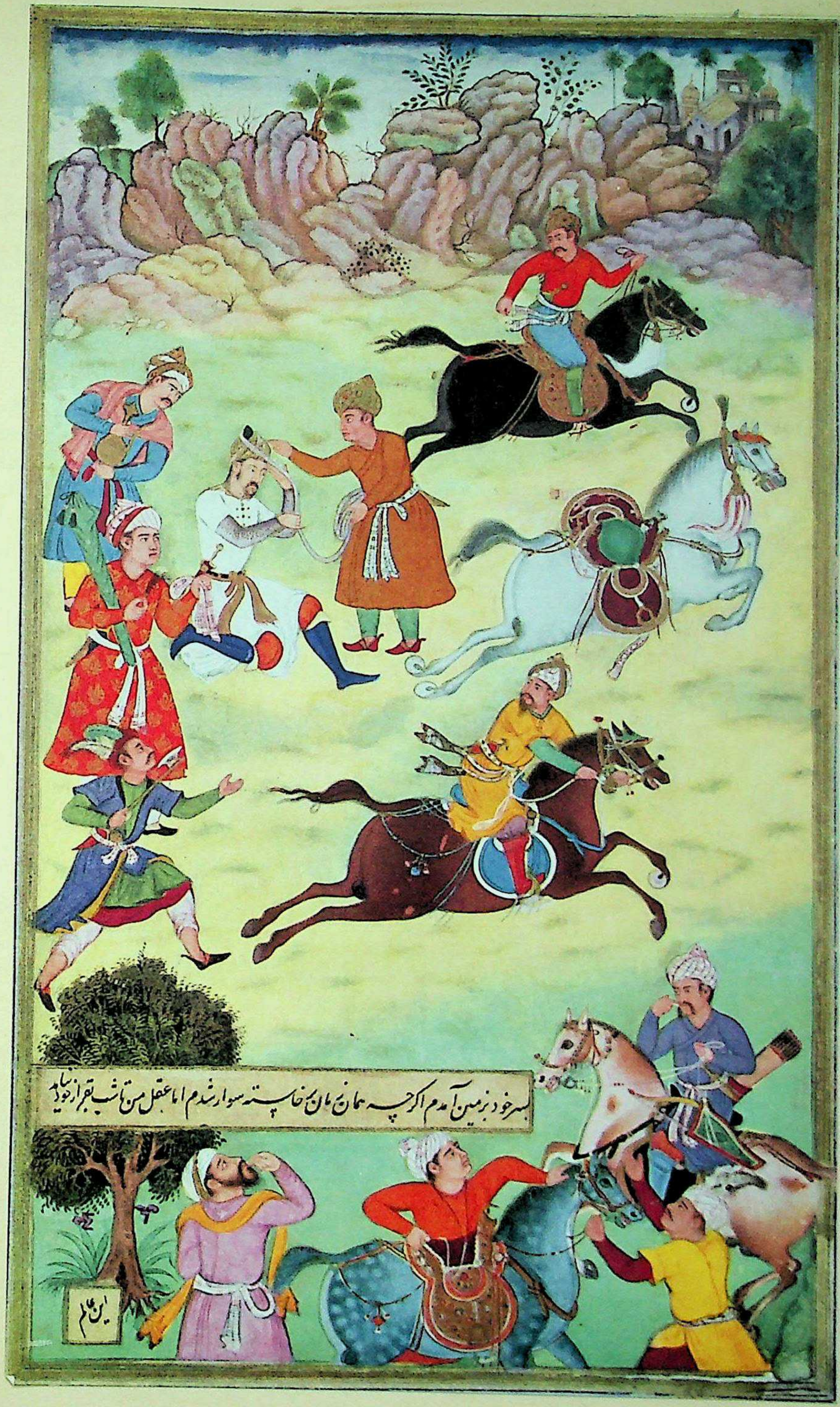

بسر خود بزمین آمدم اگرچه همان زمان برخاسته سوار شدم اما عقل من تا شب بقرار خود نیامد
این عالم

PLATE 4

FALCON

By Ustad Mansur

School of Jahangir, circa 1610-1620 *A.D. Prince of Wales Museum, Bombay.*

(Actual size)

PAINTINGS of the Jahangir period include some remarkable studies of birds, animals and flowers. Such themes attracted the Emperor greatly and his Memoirs make several references to such drawings. Ustad Mansur was the greatest bird and animal painter at his court. He started his career as a court artist in the later Akbar period, but during the Jahangir period it appears that he mostly confined himself to studies of birds, animals and flowers.

Jahangir was very fond of falcons and in consequence many drawings of this hunting bird, belonging to the Jahangir period, are to be found in various collections. There is a representative example in the British Museum, of this swift, relentless killer. The outstanding feature of the miniature by Mansur is that besides representing the hard, penetrating eye and the cruel nature of the falcon, the artist has also brought into prominence its handsome shape and colouring.

The Persian inscription reads, 'painted by Ustad'. There can be no doubt that the 'Ustad' (master) is Ustad Mansur. Signed examples by Mansur are quite rare.

He was one of the forty-eight artists of the *Babar Namah* (Plates 2 and 3).

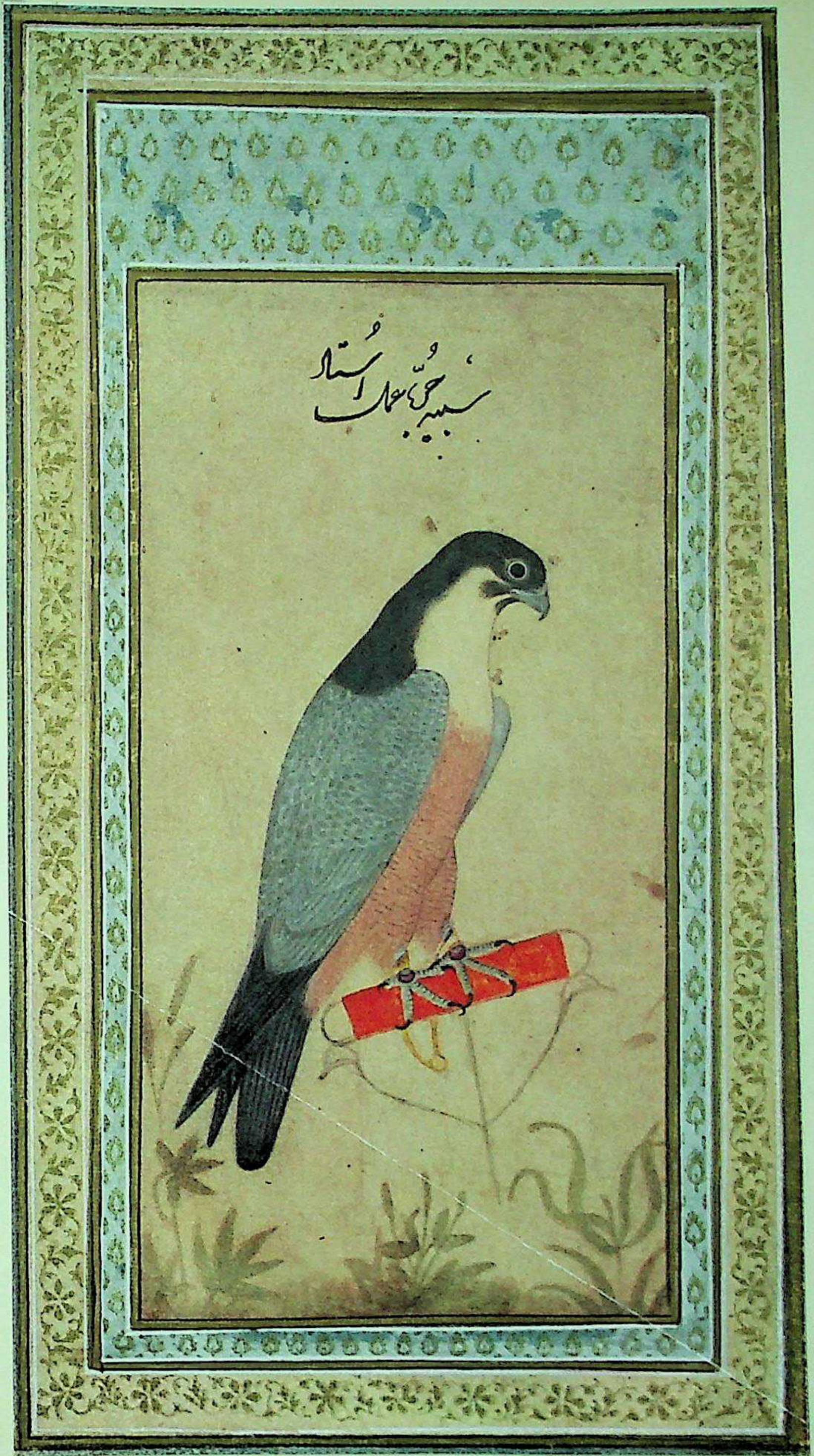

شبیه جره عمل استاد

PLATE 5

CAMEL FIGHT

School of Jahangir, circa 1610-1620 *A.D. Prince of Wales Museum, Bombay.*

(Actual size)

Animal fights have been a favourite theme with Indian painters. The 'Bull Fight' at Ajanta is well known. Fights between elephants, lions, camels, rams, and cocks, were among the favourite sports of Indian kings.

The camel, though lazy by nature, is a great fighter. Its vicious bite is well known and much dreaded.

A camel fight is a theme frequently seen in Mughal and Rajasthani painting. The example reproduced here is, however, the best of all such renderings. There is an amazing mastery over minute details, while the fierceness of the combat between the great beasts indicates the hand of a master fond of dynamic effects. It has been suggested by Karl Khandalavala that Nanha may be the artist of this *tour de force* in animal painting. The background has Chinese clouds, which were adopted from Chinese painting into Persian painting. In the foreground there are shrubs shaking in the wind, treated in the manner of the Persian convention. The artist Honhar also painted such fine, delicately coloured drawings, and it is possible that this miniature is from his brush when he first became a court painter in the reign of the Emperor Jahangir.

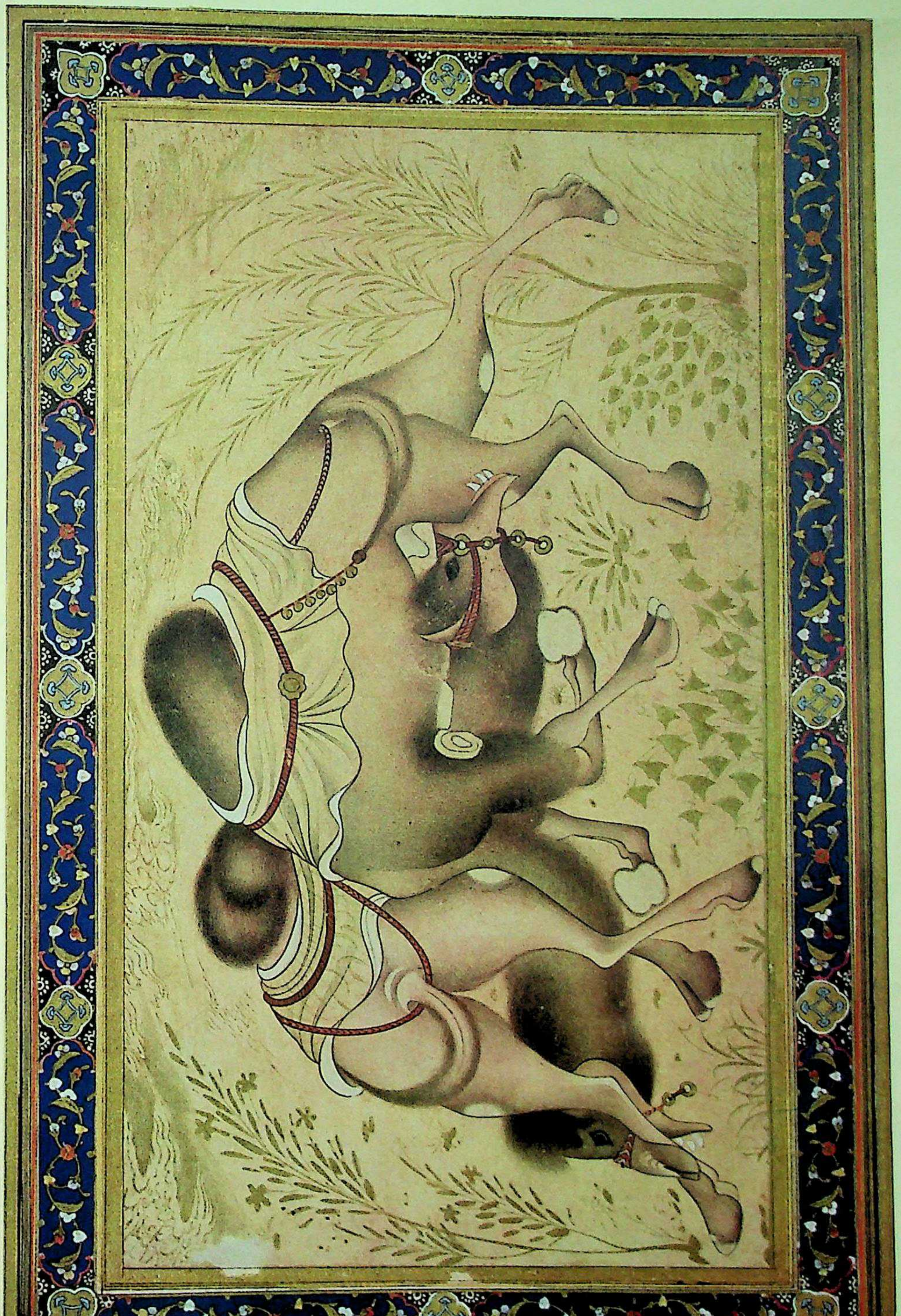


PLATE 6

THE MEETING OF PRINCE MURAD AND NAZAR MUHAMMAD RULER OF BALKH AND BUKHARA

By Fateh Chand.

School of Shah Jahan, circa 1645 *A.D. Bharat Kala Bhavan, Banaras.*

(13¾ x 9½ ins.)

IN 1644 Shah Jahan sent two military expeditions to conquer the region of Balkh and Bukhara, which was in the hands of the Uzbegs, but they were not successful. In 1645, he proceeded to Kabul in person and from there sent a large force commanded by his son Prince Murad under the guidance of Ali Mardan against Balkh and Bukhara. This force met with complete success. At first the son of the Uzbeg ruler offered his submission to Murad, and then later on Nazar Muhammad himself followed suit. Monstuart Elphinstone, in his *History of India* (p. 514, London 1849, Third Edition), states :

> 'Shah Jahan himself resolved to move to Kabul, and to send on his son, Prince Murad, under the guidance of Ali Mardan Khan, with a large army, into Balkh. This expedition was completely successful. Murad was joined by some of Nazar Muhammad's sons, and afterwards received the submission of that chief'.

The miniature reproduced here depicts Nazar Muhammad meeting Murad. In the background, the mountain and the trees are treated in the realistic manner frequently observed during the Shah Jahan period. At the foot of the mountain, on the right, there is a big water reservoir, and on the left the Mughal encampment. The royal standard is fluttering over the camp of the Prince. Soldiers, elephants, and camels are shown moving in the background. The tent-fly is decorated with a floral scroll at the top. Below this, are arched compartments with spandrils and rose bushes around which butterflies are seen fluttering. In the mid-foreground, enclosed by a wooden fence, there is a carpeted *chauki* furnished on both sides with brocade pillows. The *chauki* is covered with a golden canopy in three pieces.

The scene under the canopy reflects the glory and the court etiquette of the Mughals.

On the *chauki*, Nazar Muhammad is embracing Murad. Behind Murad, on the ground, stands Ali Mardan, and behind Nazar Muhammad is Saadullah Khan, the Chief Minister of the Mughal Empire. His extended right hand indicates that he is introducing the Uzbeg chief. The officers standing in two rows in the foreground have afforded the painter an interesting pattern for his composition.

The fine brush work and colouring are distinguishing features of this painting. They impart to portions of it the effect of enamelling.

Below the wooden fencing the name of the painter, Fateh Chand, is inscribed in cursive Persian characters.

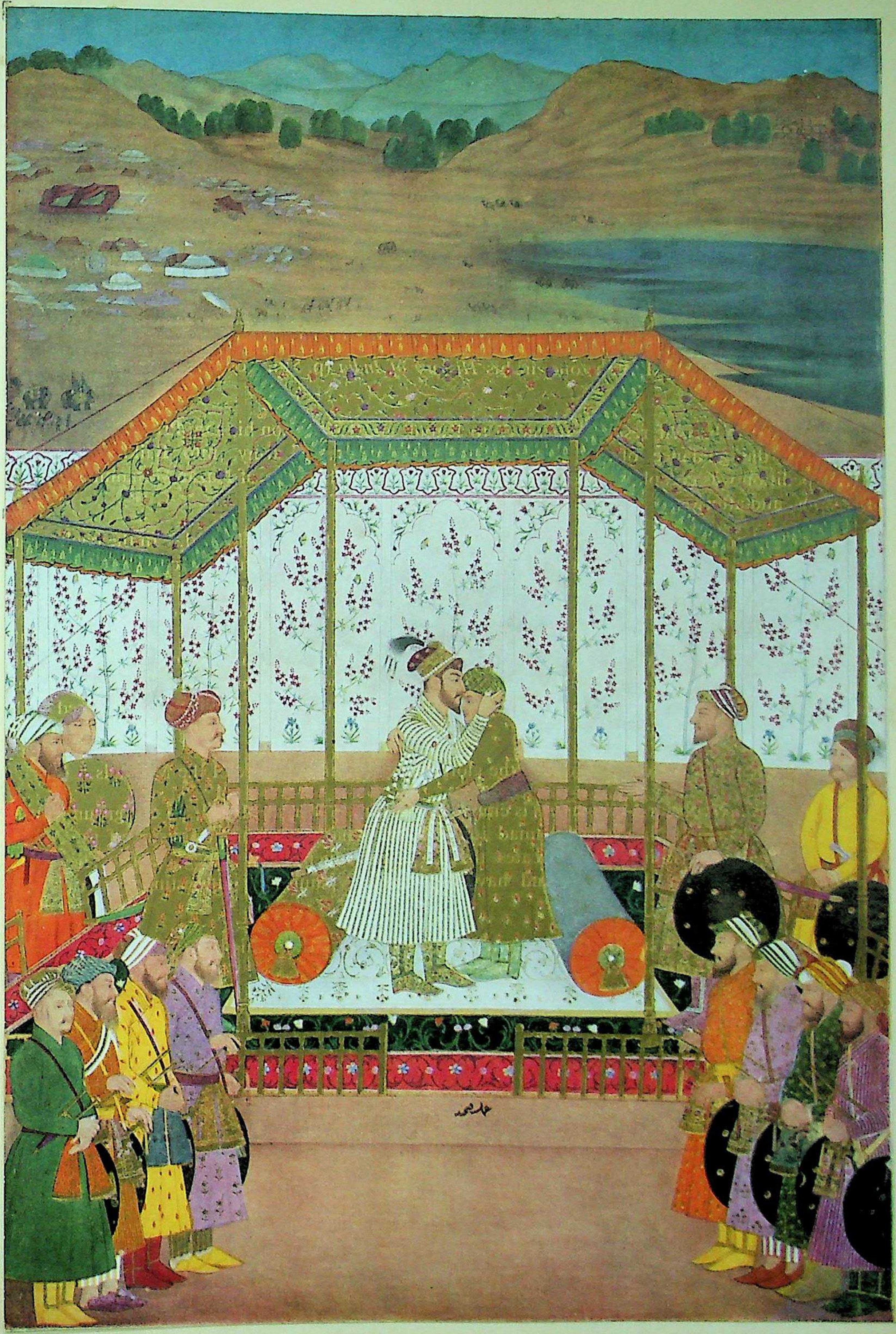


PLATE 7

A MUGHAL BEAUTY

School of Shah Jahan, circa 1628-1658 *A.D. Bharat Kala Bhavan, Banaras.*

(Actual size)

A LARGE number of portraits of Mughal ladies are found in various collections. Despite a conventional mode of treatment there is so much diversity in their faces that it is unlikely that they were all imaginary studies.

A portrait by a woman artist named Sahifah Banu is known, and there is a miniature in the Bharat Kala Bhavan which depicts a woman painter drawing a portrait in the harem. Accordingly there can be no room for doubt that even women in the Mughal period did cultivate the art of painting. It is, therefore, possible that authentic portraits even of the high-born ladies living in the seclusion of the harem were made. There were also many beautiful women attached to the palace who were not kept in strict seclusion and several of the Mughal portraits of lovely ladies may well be studies of such women.

These portraits, though somewhat formal, are well worth attention with their delicately modelled faces, graceful figures, and the emphasis on the charm of youthful beauty.

In the portrait reproduced here, there is an exquisiteness matched only by the excellence of its technique. In paintings of Shah Jahan period fineness of brush work is at its best. In this study for instance, the delicate flesh tones are seen through the transparent Dacca muslin, while every strand of hair of the coiffure, and every precious stone inlaid into ornaments betokens skill and care of a high order. The lotus in the hands of the lady imparts to the portrait study a characteristically Indian touch. The probable date of the miniature is about 1640.

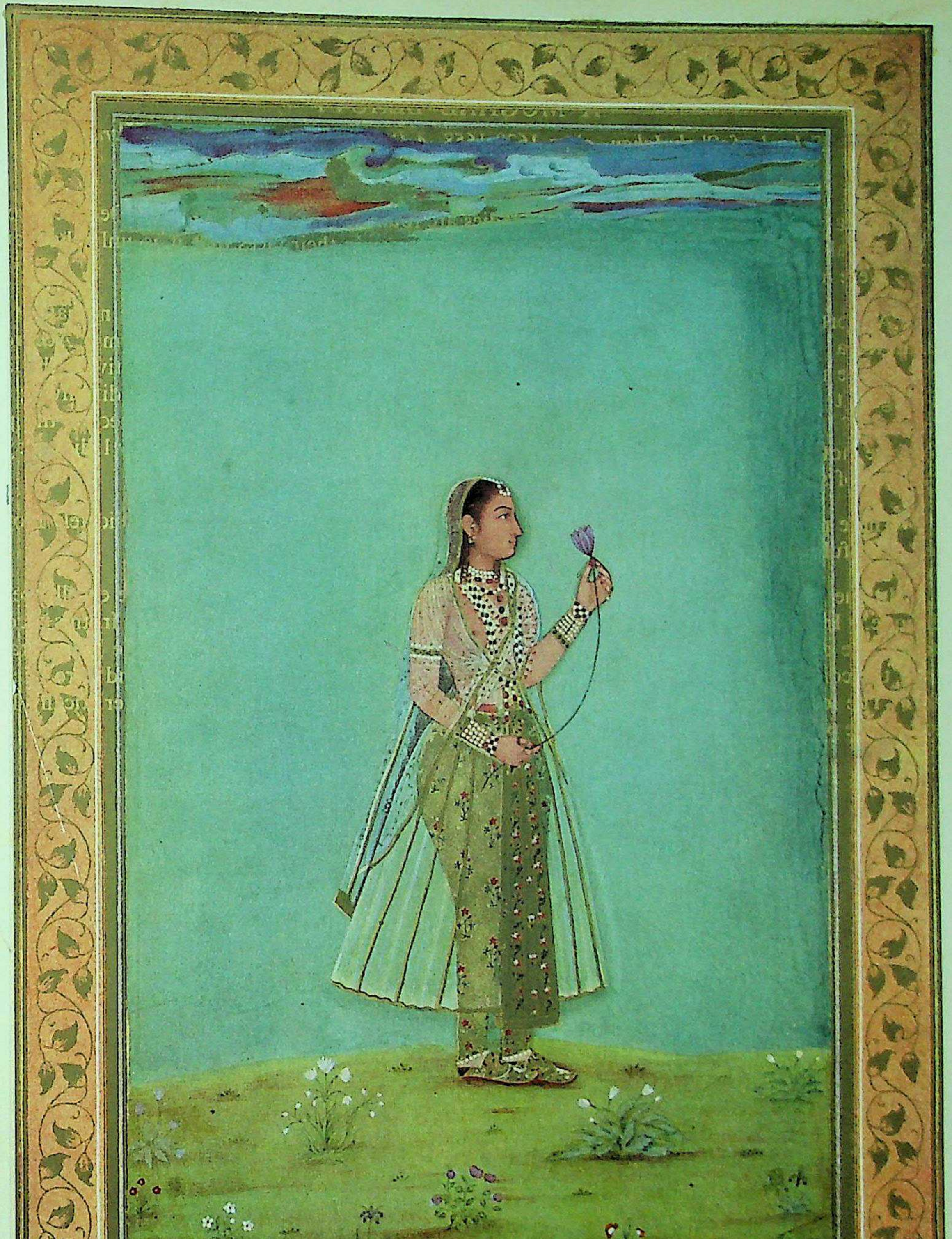


PLATE 8

THE DARBAR OF SHAH JAHAN

School of Shah Jahan, circa 1645 *A.D. Bharat Kala Bhavan, Banaras.*

(13½ x 9 ins.)

Several paintings of the court of Shah Jahan, with its pomp and magnificence, are known to us. Such paintings, as also others, depicting incidents from his life, probably formed part of the royal copy of the *Badshah Namah* which, no doubt, was later on broken up and dispersed.

These court scenes are notable for the attention paid to minute details and the enamel-like glow of their colours. The composition is cleverly balanced by placing Shah Jahan above in a corner and then arranging the courtiers in rows before him and introducing the elephant saluting the Emperor with upraised trunk. In front of the elephant stands a fine blue roan horse. To emphasize the full glory of the Mughal court, horses and elephants were frequently introduced into paintings of court scenes, ever since the days of Akbar. Amongst the courtiers Mirza Raja Jaisingh is easily recognizable in the first row.

Having regard to of the hills in the background the provenance of this darbar scene appears to be Mandu or Ajmer. The portrait of Shah Jahan belongs to a period after the death of his beloved wife Mumtaz Mahal when his hair had turned completely grey.

The cusped arch, which first became popular in Mughal architecture in the Shah Jahan period, is seen artistically surmounting the red and gilded pillars of the Shah Jahan order.

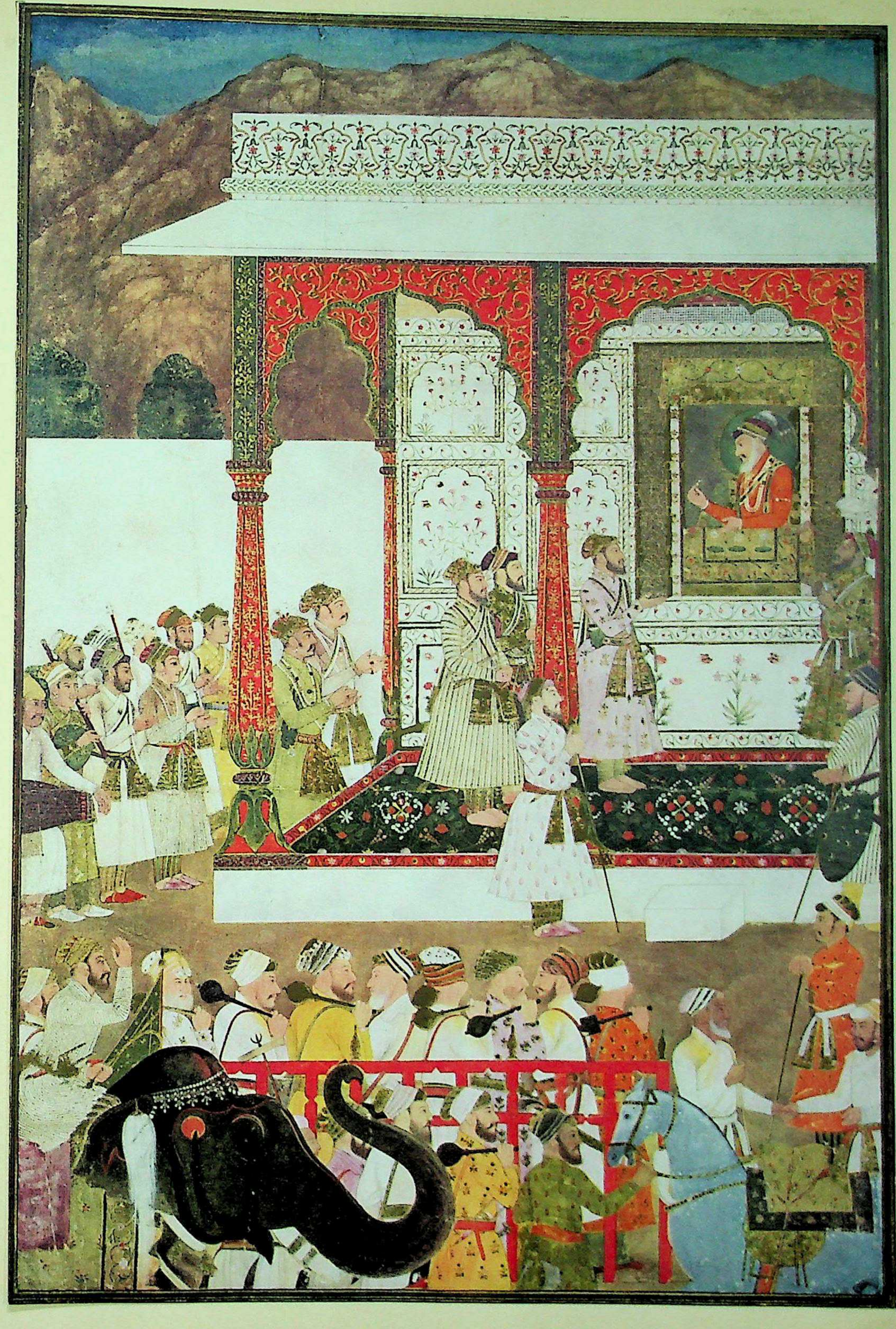


PLATE 9

AT THE WELL

Probably school of Farrukh Siyar—1st quarter of the 18th century.
Collection of Sir Cowasji Jehangir, Bart., Bombay.
($13\frac{3}{4}$ x 11 ins.)

In the 18th century Mughal painting was being influenced by the Rajasthani and Deccani schools, which had drawn inspiration from it in the 17th century.

The painting reproduced here is a good example of this reversal of roles. Here we are confronted with a synthesis of Mughal, Rajasthani and Deccani art.

Aurangzeb's long campaign in the Deccan was one of the main factors contributing to the Deccani influence. There is no doubt that he had painters in his employ while he campaigned in the Deccan and when these painters returned to their homes and to the cities of the north it was inevitable that Deccani characteristics should occasionally make their appearance in Mughal painting of the first half of the 18th century.

In Mughal days, as before, and even now, the village well had a definite place in the social life of the people. It was the rendezvous of the women folk from neighbouring villages who came there to draw water. Here they displayed their ornaments and costumes, and gossiped freely on many topics, and indulged in pleasantries. In the miniature reproduced, the tired hunter, some prince or Nawab, quenches his thirst at the hands of a beautiful maiden, while a bevy of young girls is congregated at the well. The theme was a very popular one in 18th-century painting, and this is perhaps the best example of the subject known to us. The *zanana* ladies who have accompanied the hunting party, and who normally dwell in the seclusion of the purdah, are seen enjoying their freedom and amusing themselves on a swing. Two musicians are seated outside a holy man's hut; hunters are engaged in the chase; women with water pitchers on their heads are returning to their homes; animals are fleeing to safety; birds are flying overhead, and herdsmen are tending their cattle.

The painting breathes the happy and care-free atmosphere of the countryside. The representation of variegated clouds is a peculiar *cliche* for depicting the sky in many 18th-century miniatures. The tree-forms and their arrangement show Deccani influence, as also the landscape and the city walls beyond the river. The ladies of the hunting party as well as the village maidens are in the mixed Rajput-Mughal idiom.

The Emperor Farrukh Siyar reigned from 1713 to 1720 A. D. and it is feasible on stylistic grounds to attribute the present miniature to his reign.

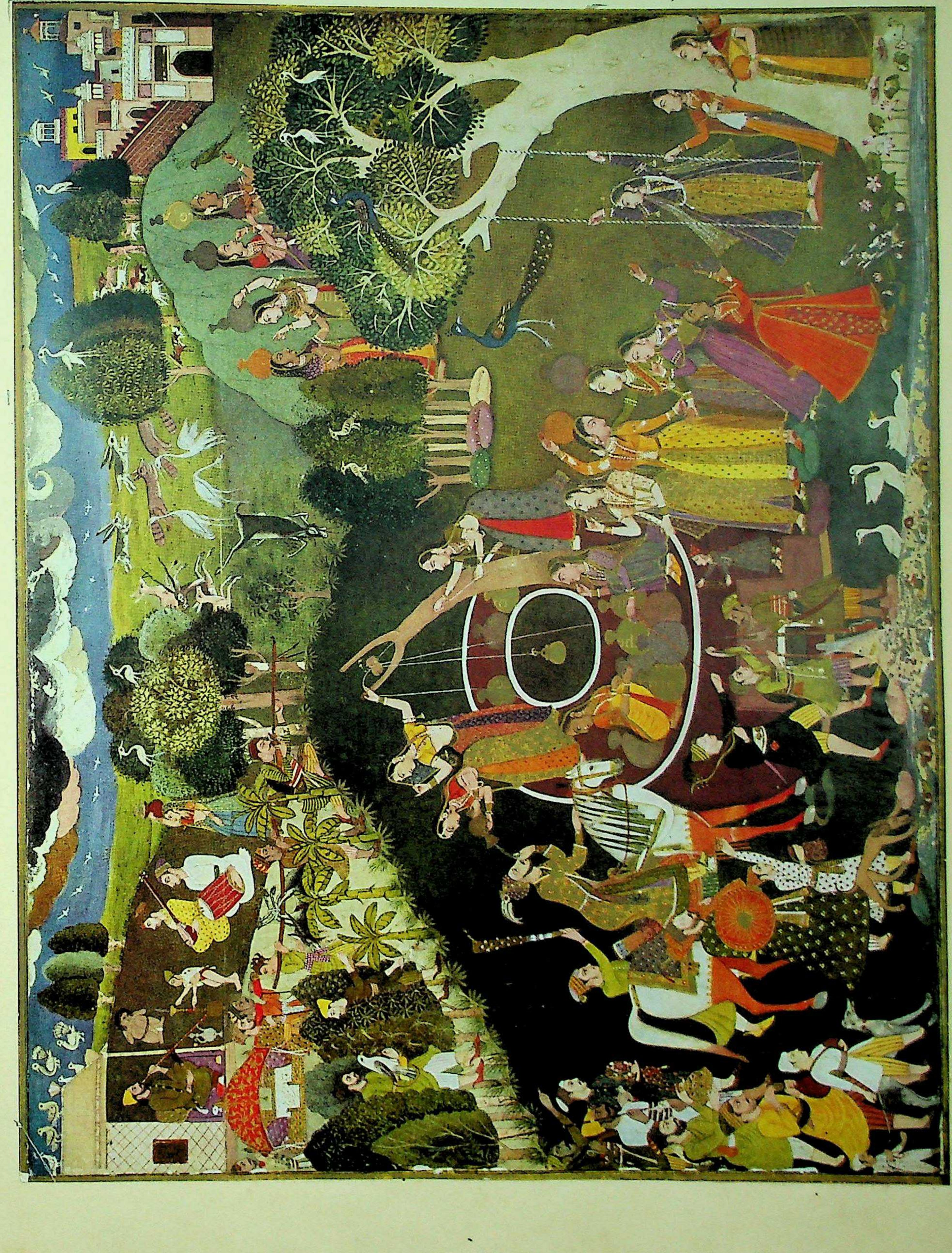


PLATE 10

PORTRAIT OF JAHANGIR

School of Shah Alam—3rd quarter of the 18th century.
Collection of Shantikumar Morarji, Bombay.
(Actual size)

This portrait of Jahangir is a copy made in the reign of Shah Alam, but obviously from some old *charba* (tracing). The original was by the famous artist Bichittar painted during the last years of Jahangir's reign and is now in the Chester Beatty collection.

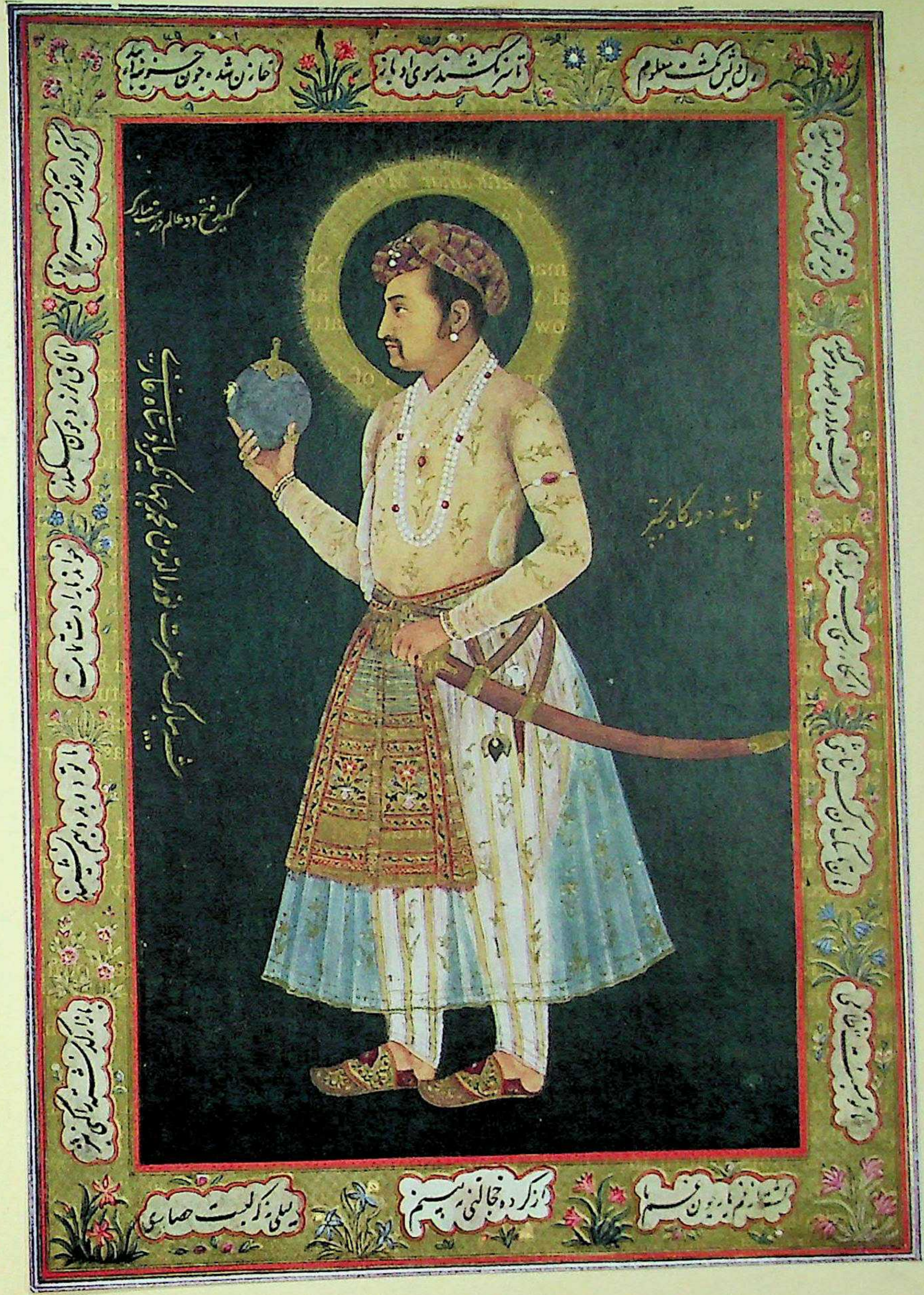
At first sight Plate 10 appears to be another version of the Chester Beatty example by Bichittar himself, but a searching eye can detect that it is a Shah Alam period copy from an old *charba.* The very appearance of the picture basically differs from the original. The touches are hard and unlike the flow which characterized the work of Jahangir's painters. The face lacks the colour-modelling and characteristic flesh-tint of the Jahangir period, and shows a method of shading and application of colour seen in Shah Alam's reign. Because of this lack of colour modelling, Jahangir's face in the present example is smooth and youngish in contrast to the faithful likeness of the Chester Beatty example. Bichittar was really a painter of the Shah Jahan school, to which period most of his work belongs, and apparently first rose to prominence only in the last years of Jahangir's reign when the Emperor had distinctly aged. It is also apparent that in the present miniature the artist was not painting from life, and thus missed the subtler characteristics of Jahangir's face which are seen even in his earlier portraits by those master artists who painted between 1610 and 1620. In the present miniature the shading on the palm of the hand holding the orb, by a series of rough brush strokes, is a technical feature quite foreign to the Jahangir-Shah Jahan period, and not to be found in the work of the master-artist Bichittar. Such rough shading is, however, seen in the work of the Shah Alam period.

Moreover, the somewhat stiff and awkward treatment of the right hand and arm indicates that it is not the brush of Bichittar. The copyist though following the *charba* has not been able to realize how a slight deflection has affected the right arm and hand (compare with *Library of Chester Beatty*, Vol. 3, Plate 57).

One more feature to be taken into account is the *patka* (waist-sash). The floral spray in the *patka* decoration is never seen till after the reign of Jahangir, and this circumstance also shows that the present miniature could not be a work of the Jahangir period. The gold floral pattern on the transparent *jamah* is also an innovation, and does not appear in the Chester Beatty example.

The inscription in gold imitates the penmanship of the inscription on the Chester Beatty portrait, but any experienced calligraphist could have done this. The phrasing of the inscription and its placement however differ from that of the Chester Beatty miniature. The mount and *hashiyah* are successful imitations of the Jahangir period and it is well known that many Shah Alam copies were mounted on *hashiyahs* which looked like originals. Even the authentic seals of the former Emperors were stamped on such mounts. The idea was not to fake but to replace those lost earlier examples which had been highly esteemed in the royal collection, and the *charbas* of which were still available for use.

The great importance of Plate 10 lies in the fact that even in the Shah Alam period there was a Mughal artist, may be a descendant of Bichittar, who could so wonderfully imitate the work of his great ancestor of the time of Jahangir and Shah Jahan, and who possessed skill of a very high order. So many of the paintings in the famous Wantage collection in the Victoria & Albert Museum are Shah Alam period copies. However, this portrait of Jahangir transcends them all and, copy though it be, is a fine painting entitled to our admiration.



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